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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 715  
By Shepard

A RESOLUTION to recognize the exceptional contributions of the United States Military Academy at West Point and its graduates on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of its founding.

WHEREAS, in 1802 President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation establishing the United States Military Academy, devoted to the arts and sciences of warfare; he did so at the urging of some of the early leaders of our nation, such as Washington, Knox, Hamilton and John Adams, whose convictions were forged in the fires of this country's struggle for independence; and

WHEREAS, the site chosen, West Point in Orange County, New York, figured importantly during the War for Independence as a strategic and commanding site on the Hudson chosen by General Washington for fortification to deny the British forces control of the Hudson Valley and the separation of New England from the remainder of the colonies; and

WHEREAS, under the direction of Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the fortifications were designed and a 150-ton chain was extended across the Hudson to control river traffic; the

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position was never taken by the British and remains the oldest continuously occupied military post in America; and

WHEREAS, President Jefferson's wish that those attending the Academy should be representative of a democratic society has been followed throughout its history; today the 4000 cadets represent every state in the nation and several foreign nations and include women and minority groups, all of whom receive a rigorous ethical grounding beginning their first day at the Academy; and

WHEREAS, the Academy became this nation's first engineering school, and early Academy graduates were largely responsible for the design and construction of this nation's first railway lines, and improved roads, bridges and harbors; and

WHEREAS, these important contributions to the national infrastructure were in large part due to the efforts of Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, Superintendent from 1817-33, the "Father of the Military Academy," who made civil engineering the foundation of the curriculum, along with upgrading academic standards, instilling military discipline and emphasizing honorable conduct; and

WHEREAS, the values instilled at the Academy have defined the relationship between the military authority and civil authority in this nation; the long list of distinguished graduates of West Point include not only outstanding military leaders, but also those who made their mark in engineering, higher education, business, scientific research and exploration, administration in civil government at the state and national level, and high national elective office; and

WHEREAS, graduates of the Academy have faithfully served to protect the people and institutions of this nation both in times of peace and times of great national peril; often military careers languished on dusty military posts in the West and in tropical backwaters during periods of relative calm, when numbers of Americans in uniform were small. When war again burst upon the national scene, the military forces of this nation were able to rebuild around a nucleus

of graduates from the "Long Gray Line" who remained to pass on the necessary skills and tradition of military excellence learned in their years at West Point; and

WHEREAS, the Civil War pitted Academy graduates against each other in a national crisis dividing states and families; many officers of this period who adorn the pages of our history had served with one another in the Indian wars and the Mexican War; and

WHEREAS, military commanders who studied at the Academy have continued to distinguish themselves during World Wars I and II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm and the latest conflict in Afghanistan, as well as during lesser known conflicts and peace-keeping operations; and

WHEREAS, as long as the men and women who emerge from the United States Military Academy adhere to their proud tradition of "Duty, Honor, Country," and the academic and professional standards inculcated there, the citizens of the United States can contemplate our national future with confidence, secure in the knowledge that the best and brightest of this country are committed to our common defense; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Tennessee join those of every state of these United States in saluting the United States Military Academy at West Point on the occasion of its 200th anniversary; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That this General Assembly hereby extends its heartfelt congratulations to the administration, faculty, Corps of Cadets, and graduates of the United States Military Academy on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of its founding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this General Assembly joins with all Tennesseans in expressing our gratitude for, and pride in, the countless contributions made by graduates of the Academy to the preservation of our institutions and our way of life, not only on the battlefield, but also in many other areas of human endeavor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.